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TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report outlines the actions taken or under way to implement General Assembly resolution 48/207 of 21 December 1993. It covers the current methods of financing the United Nations Institute on Training and Research (UNITAR) and the improvement in the organization of its training programmes within existing resources. It also deals with issues relating to the transfer of research functions from UNITAR to other United Nations bodies and UNITAR's cooperation with United Nations organizations and relevant national and international research institutes, dealt with in paragraph 4 of the resolution, and includes some general observations concerning research in the United Nations, pursuant to the same paragraph of the resolution.

I. FINANCING OF UNITAR AND ORGANIZATION OF ITS TRAINING PROGRAMMES

2. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 48/207, the General Assembly stressed the need to ensure the financial viability of the Institute and the future development of its training programmes. Strict administrative and financial measures have since been taken in this regard, under the authority of UNITAR's Board of Trustees and in close cooperation with the Division of Administration of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The present situation, although still tenuous, is moving towards greater stability.

3. The costs of UNITAR's continuing commitments during the scaling down of its activities in New York and the transfer of its headquarters to Geneva in 1993 have been covered within the funds authorized by the General Assembly.

4. In accordance with United Nations regulations and other relevant financial statutes, only paid-in contributions and other available resources were

utilized. Thus income was in excess of expenditures. In 1993, for the first time in many years, UNITAR's General Fund showed a surplus on its operations.

5. For 1994, all administrative expenses and training programmes are expected to be covered by voluntary contributions, special-purpose grants, executing agency overheads and royalties. Voluntary contributions and miscellaneous income should amount to some US $650,000, which should be sufficient to cover estimated costs until 31 December 1994. Nevertheless, the financial situation of the Institute remains delicate. On numerous occasions, most recently in paragraph 1 of resolution 48/207, the General Assembly has appealed to Member States to make voluntary contributions, including contributions for specific training activities such as the fellowship programme in international law (resolution 48/29 of 9 December 1993, para. 15). It is hoped that this call will be heeded and that UNITAR will be in a position to mobilize significant government contributions to avoid any financial difficulties in future years and thereby be able to develop its training programmes in response to the needs of Member States.

6. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 48/207, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine "the measures taken in 1993 with a view to improving further the organization and coordination of the training programmes and research activities relating to training in New York, and to provide appropriate logistical and administrative support, within new existing resources". Pursuant to this request, programmes were organized for diplomats accredited to United Nations Headquarters until 31 December 1993. The Department of Public Information and the Training Service of the Office of Human Resources Management provided administrative support to a full-time senior fellow of UNITAR during the last quarter of 1993. These programmes with a practical orientation have been useful and well received by the diplomats from missions to the United Nations.

7. The general briefing for new delegates on the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly was organized with the assistance of the Training Service of the Office of Human Resources Management on 22 and 23 September 1994. Approximately 280 delegates from 92 Member States participated in this programme. A one-week orientation course for diplomats from Member States that will be members of the Security Council in 1995 is being planned for early December 1994.

8. Further to the recommendation of the General Assembly in paragraph 3 of resolution 48/207 and after consultation with UNITAR's Board of Trustees and the Executive Director, the Secretary-General has renewed the contracts of the full-time senior fellows for a period of one year, up to 31 December 1994, on the understanding that there would be no direct or indirect costs incurred by the United Nations. The four New York-based full-time senior fellows who have dedicated the past few years to research activities will wind up those activities at the end of 1994. The Secretary-General has requested the Executive Director to prepare precise guidelines, for the attention of the Board of Trustees, for possible future appointments of full-time senior fellows under article VI of UNITAR's statute.

II. UNITAR'S RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

9. UNITAR's cooperation with qualified national and international institutions from within and outside the United Nations system has substantially increased over the past two years. It is followed and encouraged by a committee established for this purpose by the Board of Trustees of UNITAR. Thus, efforts are under way to strengthen cooperation between UNITAR and training institutions in developing countries in the development of training programmes. In this context, UNITAR could contribute its expertise, experience and facilities, such as its network of correspondents at the multilateral level.

10. Within the United Nations system, the Secretary-General is working towards closer cooperation between UNITAR and the International Labour Organization's Training Centre in Turin and greater use by UNITAR of the Centre's facilities. Discussions are also proceeding with the ILO Training Centre on the development of specific joint ventures designed to maximize the benefits to be gained from the unique technical training and residential facilities offered by the ILO Turin Centre, in particular in the field of economic and social development. The extent to which some of these joint programmes can be fully realized is linked to the mobilization of the necessary financial resources.

11. The research programmes of UNITAR now focus on research on and for training programmes, including the publication and dissemination of pedagogical materials, such as comprehensive training packages including specially developed videos and software. A programme of correspondence instruction is also being developed. Research per se has been phased out and valuable research materials, in particular books and reference materials have been transferred to the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo. UNU and UNITAR are studying ways and means of designing joint training programmes built on the outputs of UNU's research programmes and UNITAR's training activities. Several potential areas of cooperation are being considered, particularly training in environmental management and humanitarian affairs.

12. A new and increasingly important training activity in which UNITAR, in cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat and other partners, has become involved relates to the crucial subject of peace-keeping, peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. At the request of contracting parties and with their support, UNITAR is also increasingly providing training services to the secretariats of various international conventions and other legal instruments, in particular in the field of environmental monitoring and management. Training methodologies and the structure and content of the training programmes can be adapted to the concrete needs of the parties and improved following the progressive implementation of the legal instruments. In doing so, UNITAR fully meets its statutory purpose. UNITAR is further exploring cooperation with the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, including the Environment Fund, and the United Nations Population Fund.

13. Thus, in the course of the past year, UNITAR's training programme has been streamlined and expanded in areas where the Institute enjoys a clear comparative advantage. Inter-agency cooperation has also been strengthened and should be

further developed in the coming years. The future of UNITAR and the scope of its programmes will be determined in large part by the response of Member States to the call by the General Assembly for voluntary contributions, in particular to UNITAR's General Fund, so as to ensure long-term viability.

III. ISSUES RELATING TO RESEARCH WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

14. In addition to raising specific issues relating to UNITAR, which are dealt with above, General Assembly resolution 48/207 also raises broader issues concerning the enhancement of research activities within the system, and cooperation, to this end, within the system and with other relevant institutions.

15. The organizations of the United Nations system carry out a large variety of diverse research activities, which are directed at assisting mandated functions in policy analysis, support for intergovernmental deliberations and negotiations, the provision of policy advice and technical assistance. Research activities cover the whole spectrum of political, socio-economic and legal areas, at global, regional and sectoral levels, coming within the purview of the system. Issues addressed range from political systems and the assessment of national and international policies to data gathering and methodologies for processing data on national, regional and global trends, and the elaboration of early-warning systems. Research programmes are established and carried out within the context of the specific mandates and budgets of individual organizations of the United Nations system, in relationship, as appropriate, with relevant national and international research institutes.

16. While there is at present no overall common programming of research activities as such, there is constant exchange of information which serves to prevent duplication and promote complementarity in the selection of topics and overall approaches. Specific cooperative arrangements and joint activities are established, where appropriate, to provide substantive, multidisciplinary inputs for major issues on the intergovernmental agenda, such as social issues, the advancement of women, and population and development, covered by global conferences of system-wide concern.

17. An essential objective of the research work carried out within the system is to channel new research/policy analysis findings towards intergovernmental bodies in order to assist in shaping the international policy dialogue. In turn, global, regional and sectoral intergovernmental bodies, in defining the emerging issues for multilateral cooperation, could assist in bringing about a clearer delineation of required research work. This would focus research efforts and facilitate a more rational division of labour within the United Nations system.

18. Effective policy-oriented research by United Nations bodies necessitates new theoretical approaches and the incorporation of new findings into the formulation of global policies. This requires close cooperation with relevant national and international research institutes. Renewed efforts should be made

to strengthen such networks, based on a clearer definition by Governments of the relevant policy issues requiring research within the United Nations system.

19. The recent reorganization of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the restructuring of United Nations departments in both the political and economic areas at Headquarters, and efforts to enhance linkages between the United Nations University and the United Nations and other organizations of the system, are all geared to advancing the objectives of an enhanced research capacity and enhanced coordination of research activities within the United Nations system emphasized in General Assembly resolution 48/207.